THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 1967.

Florida's Governor Sets Up Private Police Force

By MARTIN WALDRON
Special to The New York Times

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Jan. 7—Gov. Claude R. Kirk Jr., a Republican, set up this week a private police force, answerable only to him, to drive organized crime out of Florida.

The head of the private police force, George R. Wackenhut, a former special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said his officers would "investigate everyone and anyone who needs investigating."

Mr. Wackenhut is president of the Wackenhut Corporation, a nationwide private detective agency that issues monthly bulletins warning the public of the dangers in coexisting with Communism. The corporation also at times has linked a Negro civil rights movement and the "free speech" movement at the University of California with Communists.

Governor Kirk said that Florida would pay Mr. Wackenhut $1 a year for his services, and that the Wackenhut Corporation would be paid cost plus profits from money "volunteered by interested private citizens." The Governor has promised to keep secret the names of those persons contributing money to pay for the private police force.

Governor Kirk and Mr. Wackenhut have been vacationing together for the last two days at the Ocean Reef Hotel south of Miami. Mr. Kirk's office said the two men were working as well as vacationing.

Before joining the Governor, Mr. Wachenhut said at a news conference that "I can assure you we are not going to become a Gestapo." But he said his investigations would not necessarily be limited to criminals.

Mr. Wackenhut would not say who would decide who would be investigated by the private police. He said he would be the Governor's "alter ego, on a daily basis."

Mr. Kirk, a Republican, promised during his campaign that he would abolish organized crime and vice in Florida if he were elected. He said crime conditions in Fort Lauderdale and in Miami were particularly bad. Mr. Wackenhut said he already had agents at work in these two cities.

There have been criticisms and approval in the state over the idea of a private police force. State Representative John J. Savage, Republican of St. Petersburg, a former special agent of the F.B.I., said he was very much against the force.

"I cannot approve of private police," he said. "It is hitting at the very foundation of law enforcement."

Mr. Savage said he hoped Mr. Kirk would reconsider his private police idea.

"If he doesn't the next thing you know, he'll be asking us in the Legislature to give his police the power of arrest," Mr. Savage said.

'Fraught with Danger'

Florida Attorney General Earl Faircloth said the Governor "should put all the facts on the top of the table," including the source of the money to be used to pay the Wackenhut Corporation.

Secretary of State Thomas Adams said the Governor's approach to eliminating organized crime "is fraught with danger."

"There is always the danger that over the years such a private police force, answerable only to one man, could take on some of the characteristics of a Gestapo, something which we have fought wars to defeat," Mr. Adams said. He said it would be possible that one crime element would donate money to have competitors investigated.

The liberally oriented St. Petersburg Times commented editorially that the plan could be of benefit, and suggested a wait-and-see attitude.

State Representative Ray Mattox of Winter Haven praised the Governor's plan. "It can be a great contribution to law enforcement," he said.

In announcing his police force, Governor Kirk said the Wackenhut Corporation was the third largest private detective agency in the United States. The company has executive offices in Coral Gables, Fla., a suburb of Miami, and has three divisions in Los Angeles. The company has 26 offices from Puerto Rico to Hawaii.

On its board of directors are Mr. Wackenhut; Gen. Mark W. Clark; Maj. Gen. Joseph V. Dillon, who was formerly chief of United States Military Police; Maj. Gen. Kenneth P. McNaughton, former Chief of Staff of the Strategic Air Forces on Guam, all retired; Edward V. Rickenbacker, retired chairman of Eastern Air Lines; John S. Ammarell Jr., a former F.B.I. agent; Ralph E. Davis, director of the Western Division of the Wackenhut Corporation; Will M. Preston, a Miami lawyer; Raymond A. Quadt, vice president of Pascoe Steel Corporation; Stanley J. Tracy, a former assistant director of the F.B.I., and Lloyd Wright, a Los Angeles lawyer.

For several years, the corporation has mailed out a monthly Wackenhut Security Review. The company said in the review that it was "acutely aware of the threat of Communism," and presented the review to friends and employes "as an educational service." The company also has made copies of its review available to the general public.

In its review, the corporation has warned against hopes of "peaceful coexistence" between the United States and the Soviet Union. Former Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev was labeled a "false prophet of peaceful coexistence."

During 1966, the Wackenhut Security Review dealt with efforts of Communists to woo young people in the United States.

"Perversion of academic freedom" in some universities, notably in Latin America, has formed an ideal breeding ground for Communist and other extremists," the review for September, 1966, said. The same report said there were "developments" at a number of United States universities during the year, including St. John's University in New York City, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Chicago.

The August, 1966, Review dealt with efforts to "disrupt" the 1964 Democratic Convention at Atlantic City "by Negro demonstrators who kept up their demands, despite compromise attempts, that the Mississippi Freedom Democrats be seated," and with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a militant civil rights group that the Review said had been found by a Louisiana legislative investigating committee to be "substantially under the influence of the Communist party."

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